

Garbage Collector 0.1

written by Roy Wood

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Garbage Collector is shareware, so if you use it, send \$10 to me at the address listed above (please make out cheques to me, Roy Wood). The current registration fee reflects the highly unfinished state of this program. If there is sufficient interest, I will work at refining the program and providing updates free to all registered users. Once the program improves, the price will go up, so register now and encourage me to work harder (also feel free to suggest improvements).

Background:

At the highschool where I teach, there are a number of Macs in the library, and they receive a lot of student use, misuse, and occasionally abuse. In particular, the students tend to leave a lot of junk on the hard drives, and occasionally move things around. Our wonderful resident librarian has much better things to do than rooting through the machines, deleting things and reorganizing the drives, and she figured that there must be an easier way to keep things organized. After scouring local BBS's and various FTP sites, it seemed that no-one had thought of this or at least no-one had bothered to write the software.

You can probably guess the rest, and figure out where all my free time has gone to lately.

Overview:

Garbage Collector is a utility for automating the process of maintaining publicly-accessible Macintoshes. In particular, it allows you to create a master image of what the drive should look like (i.e. what files/directories should be where), then later rescan the disk and automatically restore it to the way it should be.

Disclaimer:

Garbage Collector is far from perfect right now, but it does work, so I thought I'd release it as is. I make no claims about the good behaviour of the software, so you use it at your own risk. Silicon Angst software and Roy Wood are in no way liable for any damage to your hardware, software, or data files under any circumstances.

Instructions:

If you're still interested in trying Garbage Collector, try running the program. You will be given the choice

of creating a master image of your disk, restoring the disk to the form indicated in a previously-created master image, or quitting the program. As I said, it's pretty minimal in user interface....

When you tell Garbage Collector to create a master image of your disk, it scans through all files and directories, recording names, creator, file type, creation dates, Finder info, etc., and stores this information in two files called "HD Dirs List" and "HD File List" (these are stored in the system folder). Obviously, you should organize your hard drive the way you want it before you create a master image....

When you tell Garbage Collector to restore a disk, it reloads the "HD Dirs List" and "HD File List" files, then scans all files and directories on the drive, comparing them to the original image. It tries to do a good job about restoring changed names, changed Finder info, changed locations, etc., and is usually pretty successful. If it finds new files that are not listed in the original image, it moves them to a folder called "Student Work", which is stored at the root level of the drive. Right now, the name "Student Work" is hard-coded into the program, as is the logic that forces it to scan every folder; if I receive enough interest, I'll add more flexibility to the restoration process.

Of course, if a file is missing, Garbage Collector really can't do too much about it, though it will list it in the log file as missing.

You can pause the log window's scrolling by holding down the option key. This will pause scrolling until the mouse button is clicked and released.

And that's about it.

Afterword:

Try the program out, and let me know what you think. My email addresses, snail-mail address, and telephone number are listed at the top of this text file, so you know where to find me.

-Roy Wood

To Do:

In my opinion, the following desperately need to be added to the program:

- menu-based interface, rather than tacky dialog box
- System 7 support (filenumbers, aliasÆ/Etc.)
- user-configurable name for "Student Work" directory
- user-configurable control of which directories are scanned
- better handling of errors, such as duplicate file names in the "Student Work" directory
- better use of vRefNum and dirID's instead of working directories
- ability to process volumes other than the one on which the program is stored
- scrolling log window, ability to save log to separate file

